TL1503-13

National Aboriginal & Islander
Legal Services Secretariat

Tel. (02) 699 9277 Cnr. Abercrombie & Cleveland Sts Chippendale 2008 P.O. Box 143, Chippendale

NAILSS

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

SUB-COMMISSION ON PREVENTION OF
DISCRIMINATION AND PROTECTION
OF MINORITIES

FORTIETH SESSION

AGENDA ITEM 6

THE SITUATION IN EAST TIMOR

SPEAKER : ANSELMO APARICIO

DATE : 18 AUGUST 1988

Mr Chairperson

I am Timorese.

I got out of East Timor this year, I had to abandon my country and my family. I felt that I could not survive there. Our people are being decimated while the world stands by. I was twelve years old when the Indonesian army invaded East Timor. The capital, Dili was taken first, then, 3 days later the Indonesians took my native town, Baucau.

Right from the beginning of the occupation I witnessed many violations of fundamental rights carried out by Indonesian soldiers. As far as violations go, my case is not exceptional. In fact, as a student at the Catholic seminary of Dili I even enjoyed a certain amount of protection. In East Timor serious violations are now part of our everyday life. The time available to me is not long enough for me to tell all I have seen and experienced.

Most of the inhabitants of Baucau fled to the mountains when the invasion took place and they were followed and bambed by the air force, heavy artillery and other military means, until they were forced to surrender.

When I was 15 the Indonesian armed forces carried out a large offensive against the resistance, killing and capturing large numbers of civilian Timorese who had sought refuge in the mountains. Three of my cousins who were captured were used as army carriers and leter, two of them, Julio and Acacio were executed by the soldiers. Another of my relatives, Adelino, had to pay a large sum of gold in order not to be executed. Another, Augustinho Pinto, was executed with his wife in Ainaro.

When I was 16 I was at the club at Baucau with an Italian missionary nun who was helping two injured men from Quelicai, when some soldiers suspected them of being guerrillas - simply because they were physically fit. These two men were stoned to death in front of me and a few nuns, by Indonesian soldiers from Battalions 315 and 731.

I witnessed the arrests of many Timorese, including my friend Cristiano Costa. All were tortured during their interrogations.

Cristiano was here during the last session of the Human Rights Commission. He spoke before the Commission, and I quote a part of his speech :

" was interrogated and subjected to torture. for two weeks in both Baucau and then in Dili I suffered electric shocks, beatings, burns and had my teeth broken. I still remember the name of the Indonesian official in Baucau in charge of torture and interrogations - it was Captain A. Haryanto."

Another Timorese who can testify to the use of torture in Timor is Jose Guterres. Last year at the Sub-Commission, he said

the following :

"I saw my friends being tortured too. I saw them subjected toelectric shocks, beaten by iron and wooden rods, their toes being placed under a table leg with soldiers and officials sitting on top of the table, cigarettes extinguished on the skin, inthe ears and on the sexual organs. they were also kicked with heavy leather boots in the chest.

In 1979, when a delegation from abroad went through Baucau, the Indonesian tanks were taken to Nu-Bere to be hidden. As a carrier (TBO) of Battalion ARMED-7, I had to cut down many bananatrees belonging to inhabitants of Nu-Bere to hide these tanks.

In 1981, all healthy timorese aged between the age of 12 and 55 were mobilised by Indonesian soldiers for an operation called "operasi Sapu Bersih" directed against the resistance. My closestrelatives could not escape this forced mobilisation - I was lucky enough to get out of it as I had started my studies at the seminary. My relatives who had beenmobilised were forced to serve as human shields to protect the Indonesian soldiers.

In 1982, during the school holidays, I got a military authorization - the SURAT JALAN which is required ba al Timorese who wish to travel - to visit my family in Baucau.

I fell ill on the way and so I stopped at Manatuto. As I had not shown my pass to the military within the given time-limit, I was stopped and brutally hit by an Indonesian sergeant of the command of the district of Manatuto. I was only set free when a priest intervened on my behalf.

As early as in 1982, when I was fifteen, I was beaten in front of my mother by marines for having defended the catholic faith.

During the 1982 Indonesian general election, one of my fellow students from the seminary and I were taken at night by agents of teh secret service - we were interrogated and threated because we had not voted. The day before the elections I had seen Indonesian soldiers forcing Timorese to vote for the dominant Indonesian party : Golkar.

In 1983 I was allowed to visit some of my relatives who were detained in the Comarca prison in Dili. There I saw prisoners who showed signs of ill-treatment and torture. Amongst these I recognised in particular Caetano Guterres, David Dias Ximenes, sergeant Januario Ximenes, Francisco Carvalho, Agapito and others who are at present detained in the central prison of Cipinang, in Djakarta.

Some of my companions, Joao Mau Leça, Espirito Santo, Antonio Isidoro, Pedro de Tirilolo, Norberto de Dare, Tunilo de Dili, Benjamin Guterres de Venilale, just disappeared after having been arrested by Indonesian soldiers.

In 1983 my school was visited by a team of Portugese television journalists. This team was always surrounded by agents of the Indonesian secret services who observed our attempts to get into contact with the journalists. When I returned to the seminary I received threats and insults from these agents. During this visit the military equipment in Dili was hidden so that it would not be filmed by the television team. It is in fact normal during the rare visits of foreign delegations and journalists, to stop traffic in the roads that lead to the Indonesian barracks and to the military cemetary.

On the 24th May 1987 I was forced by elements of the indonesian Military police to look straight at the sun, do and jumps, and finally be plunged into a vat of human and animal excrement. This was because I had accidentally passed by the military cemetary - as I did every day on my way to school - at a time when this road was forbidden because the funerals of indonesian soldeiers killed in fights against the resistance were taking place. Other timorese including some taxi drivers were undergoing similar treatment at the same time as me.

In december 1987 one of my friends, Domingos Castro, once a professor, was taken away by the Indsonesian police, since then he has disappeared.

In January 1988 I travelled again from Dili to Baucau, having received a pass from the Indonesian commanders. At the military control post, in Metinaro, still in the Dili area, I was kicked and hit with sticks for not having saluted the soldiers at this post.

During the last months I spent in Dili I taught at San José, a school in the diiocese, the only one which teaches portugese. this school is the object of constant persecutions by the Indonesian secret services, which accuse it of undertaking political action against the government. The pupils and the teachers are closely watched by the secret services, and some have been arrested and have disappeared. In december 1987 and January 1988 on eof my pupils was arrested and others, including even the priests Leão de Costa and Cunha, who were accused of having spread anti-Indonesian posters around the capital were subjected to interrogation.

The day I left Dili, Arnaldo Araùjo was buried there. He was the first governor of East Timor to be nominated by the occupying forces. Hardly two months ago, in June, Joao Martins, ex-responsible for the Indonesian Education and Social services died. In 1986 both of them, considered suspect by the occupying forces were arrested and subjected to interrogation. Recentrly Joao Martins was a teacher at the San José school. He died during a party to which he had he had strangely been invited by the Indonesian authorities. Like Arnaldo Araujo he is thought to have died from poisonning. We linked these suspicious deaths of well-known Timorese personalities to unexplained incidents

which had led to the death of timorese students in Indonesia.

Mr. Chairperson,

I grew up in a land where Human Rights are not respected, where terror rules, where the indonesian military presence imposes total submission. Having grown up in this environment, I had begun to believe that the power of arms was sovereign everywhere. It is with surprise and happiness, that, once away from occupied East Timor, that I notice that freedom of expression, of movement, cultural freedom and even the right to protest, exist.... Why then is my people not allowed to enjoy this right as other peoples do ?

Mr chairperson,

My experience leads me to fear that measures may be taken against my family as a result of this testimony. I therefore ask you to use the means at your disposal to protect those of my relatives who are still in Tinmor, and to promote the fundamental rights of the Timorese people.

Thank you Mr. Chairperson.

Anselmo de costa Aparicio